Cake decorating 25

THE COMPLETE GUIDE

UK £1.50; Republic of Ireland IR£1.50; Australia $3.75; New Zealand $4.75 inc.GST; Singapore $4.50; Malaysia $5.50; South Africa R6.75 inc. VAT, R6.14 (excl. Tax – other countries); Malta 75c

SOR

ORBIS
DE AGOSTINI
GROUP

Love Lane

HAVE TO HAND

Ingredients: 20cm (8in) oval rich fruit cake • apricot glaze • 1.25kg marzipan • 875g royal icing • black, white, yellow, brown, blue, pink and green food colourings.

Equipment: 25cm (10in) round cake board • greaseproof paper • acetate • nos. 0, 1 and 8 piping tubes • 90cm (1yd) ribbon or paper band for cake board • paintbrush • sharp metal scriber • tilting turntable.

Main skill: piping linework.

DIFFICULTY	TIME	SUITABILITY
✓ ✓	⧗ ⧗	

This endearing cake allows you to develop your linework and has a humorous design which is suitable for grown-ups and children alike.

The design on this cake – a light-hearted country scene – relies on delicate linework to form the picture in various pastel colours. The design has a feeling of uncluttered simplicity about it which relies on a steady hand and constant pressure on the piping tube. It is not, however, especially time-consuming to make, and it is well worth the effort.

LINEWORK SKILLS

Those of you who enjoy linework, or wish to develop your linework skills, will find this an ideal cake to work on. The impression given should be that of a light and confident touch – the cake has an air of freedom about it which you should try and convey.

PIPING AROUND THE SIDES

The side template is particularly effective. The fence which runs around the side of the cake provides a firm structure for the overall design, and it also gives a beautifully finished look to the cake. This effect, however, can only be accomplished with a tilting turntable. If you do not have a suitable turntable, choose some pretty ribbons which match the colours of the balloons in the design, and use them to create a festive side decoration. The central focus of the two sweethearts makes the cake especially suitable for an engagement party, a wedding anniversary – or even as a novel way of celebrating a wedding.

However, children love teddy bears and the cake would also suit a little girl. You can change the inscription on the cake, and on the signpost to suit the occasion. All in all, this is a cake which is suitable for all levels of cake decorators and is sure to be appreciated.

tip

PRACTISING LINEWORK

You can practise the linework on this cake before you start the real thing by piping the whole design on to glass in a single colour.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

1 Marzipanning the cake: Brush the surface of the cake with apricot glaze and then coat it with a layer of marzipan.

2 Royal icing the cake: Cover the cake with three good coats of royal icing. Leave enough time for the icing to dry between each coat.

3 Attaching the cake to the board: When the final coat of icing is dry, attach the cake to the board. Then flood the rest of the board with royal icing. Leave to dry.

4 Tracing the top template: Trace the top template on to greaseproof paper.

5 Tracing the side template: Trace the side template of the fence and attached balloons.

6 Scribing the top design: Scribe the top template on to the cake using a sharp metal scriber.

7 Mixing the royal icing: Begin to make up the colours needed for the linework. Cover the icing with a damp cloth to prevent it drying out.

8 Beginning the linework: Pipe the design on to the top of the cake using a no. 1 piping tube. Begin with the sun and the clouds and follow the guide provided in order to proceed.

9 Piping in the blossoms: Pipe in the blossoms in various pastel shades. Add a tiny stamen to each.

10 Positioning the side template: Place the side template around one half of the cake. Work from side to side.

11 Scribing the side template: Scribe the side template on to the cake. Use a tilting turntable and start from the back of the cake. You will need to position the side template twice in order to scribe the design all the way around the cake.

12 Piping around the side: With a no. 1 tube and brown royal icing, pipe the side design, starting with the fence.

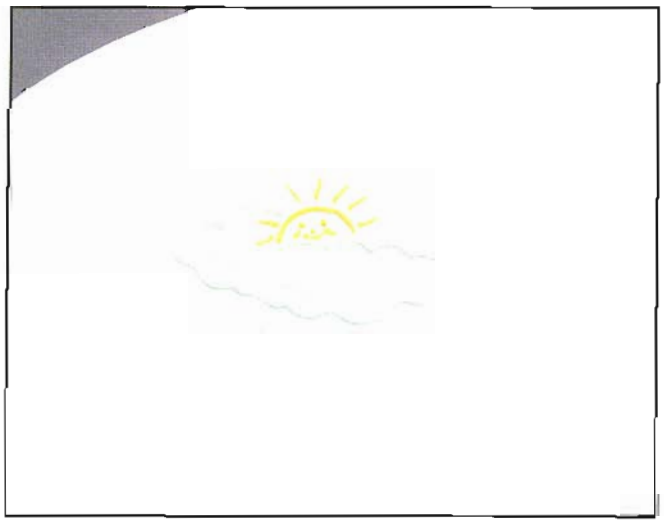
13 Piping the inscription: With a no. 1 tube, pipe the inscription in a blue-green royal icing.

14 Piping the top border: Pipe a row of shells around the top of the cake with a no. 8 piping tube and some white royal icing.

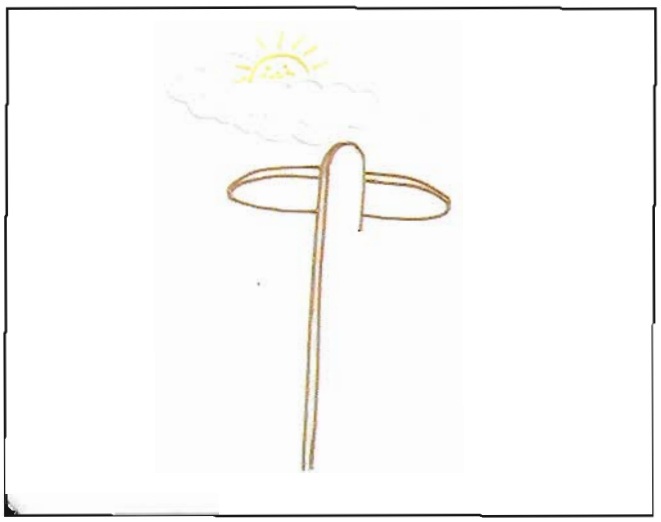
15 Piping the bottom shells: With the same no. 8 tube, pipe a row of large shells at the base where the cake meets the board.

16 Decorating the board: Once you have finished the linework, trim the cake board with some white ribbon, or any shade which complements the cake.

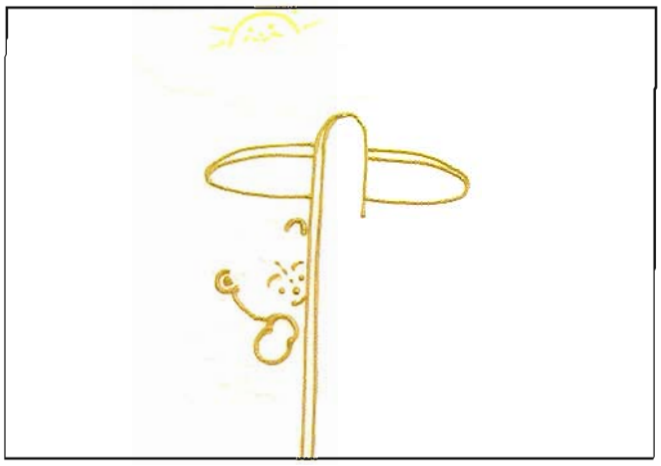
PIPING THE TOP DESIGN



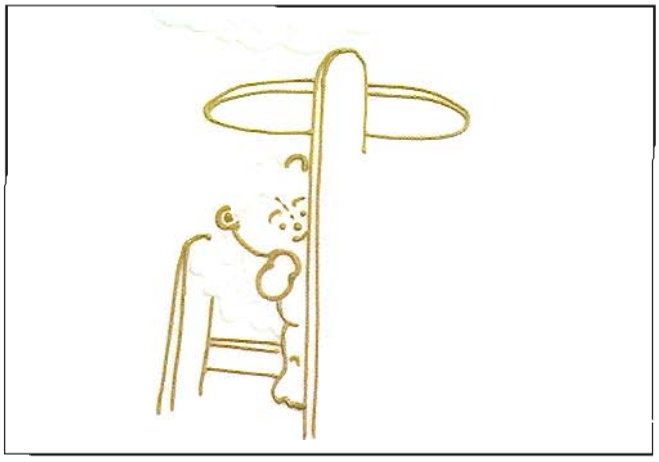
1 Beginning the piping: Begin by piping the sun and his smiling face in yellow royal icing with a no. 1 tube. When this is dry, outline the clouds in white. If you make a mistake, just wait for the icing to dry and then remove it.



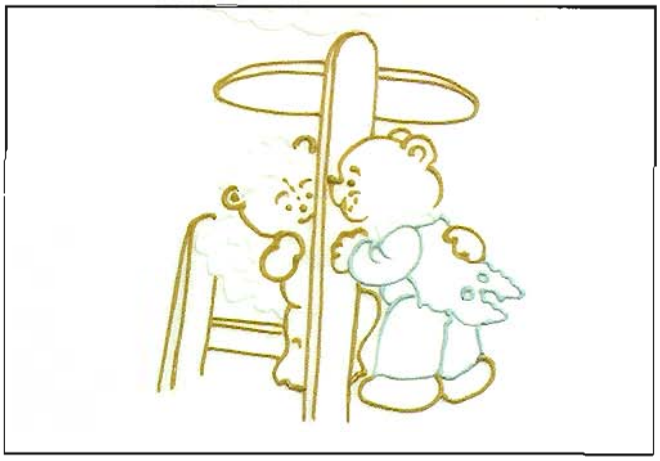
2 Piping the signpost: Using brown royal icing and a no. 1 piping tube, start to pipe the vertical part of the signpost, beginning at the top. Do not paint in the right-hand line, since this will be overlaid by the male bear.



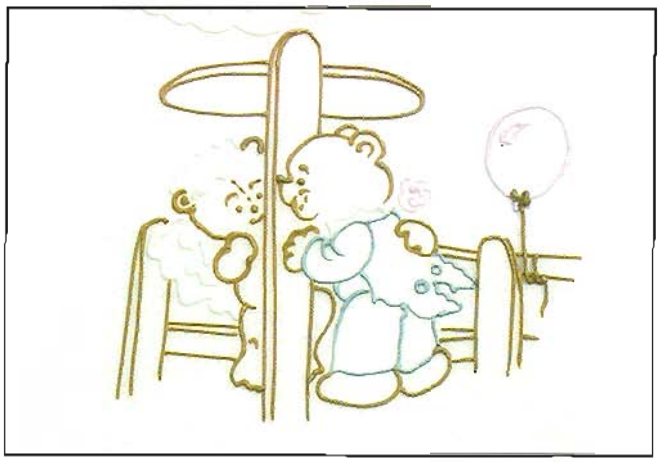
3 Piping the female bear: With a no. 1 tube, pipe the veil on the head of the female bear in white royal icing. Then pipe in the outlines of her shape and add her face.



4 Finishing the fence: With the same no. 1 tube, pipe in the fence section behind the female bear. Make sure you pipe a clear join between the brown and white icing.



5 Piping the male bear: Now pipe in the body of the male bear, including his feet. Mix black and white paste colouring and pipe in his dress coat in grey.

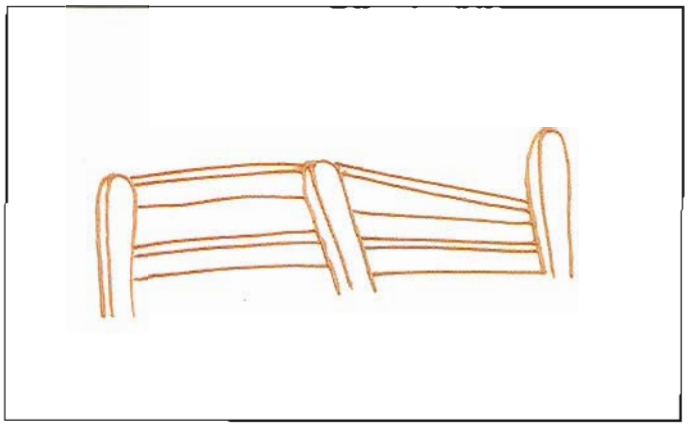


6 Piping the balloons: Pipe in the right-hand side of the fence. Add the balloon in pink and the squiggle which signifies the reflected light. Loop the string around the fence.

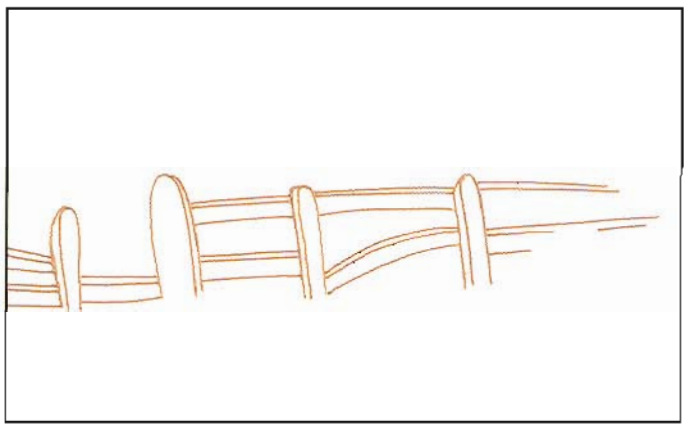
7 Piping the inscription: Pipe in the inscription in blue-green royal icing. Notice that the 't' in 'with' is joined by a long stem to the 'L' in love.

8 Piping the blossoms: With a no. 1 tube, add the blossoms and leaves to the design. Add the creases to the male bear's trousers. Pipe in the inscription on the signpost.

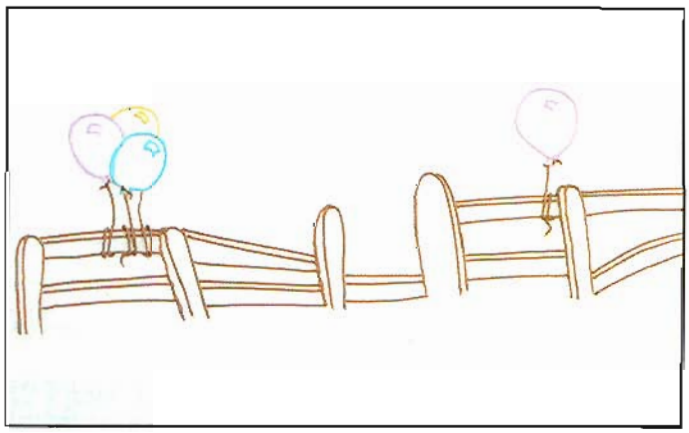
PIPING THE SIDE DESIGN



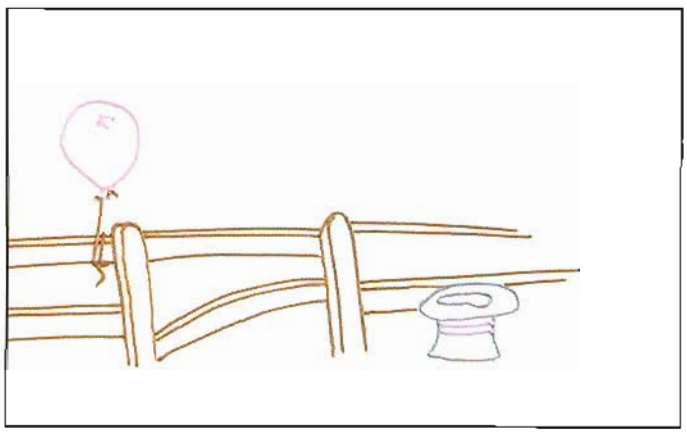
1 Piping the fence: When piping the fence, using a no. 1 tube, you will probably find it easier to pipe in the vertical sections first. Try not to let any joins show.



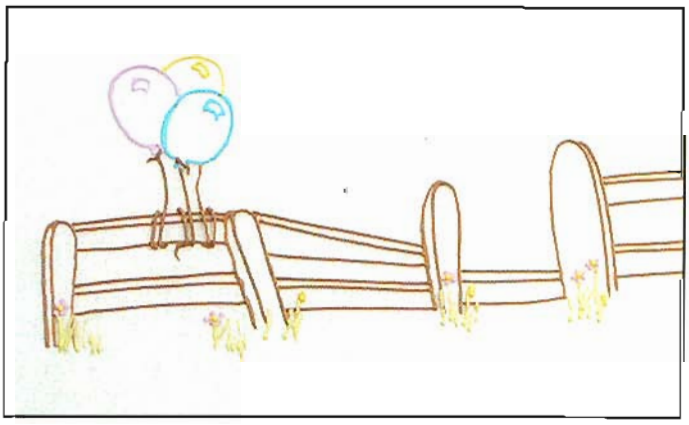
2 Finishing the fence: Continue to pipe the fence all the way around the cake. Follow the scribed design and make sure you leave the gap for the top hat on both sides of the cake.



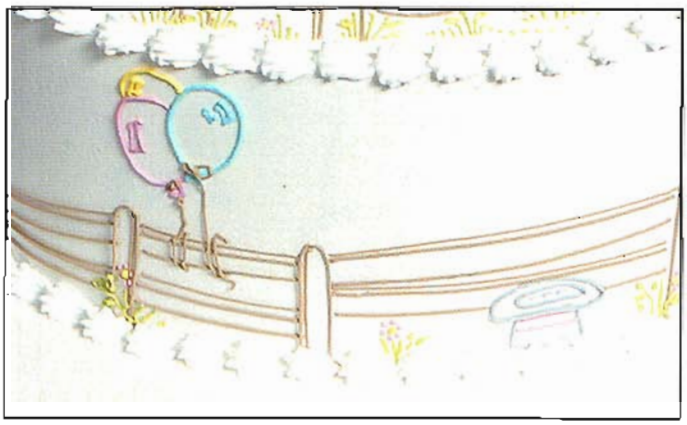
3 Piping the balloons: Pipe the balloons first in three different pastel colours, using a no. 1 tube. Then pipe the delicate strings, looping them around the fence.



4 Piping the top hat: Using a no. 1 tube, pipe in the upturned top hat at the base of the cake in grey royal icing. Pipe in two pink lines around it to represent the band.



5 Piping the blossoms: Using a no. 0 tube, pipe the wild flowers, which echo the bride's veil, around the base. Give each a tiny yellow stamen. Pipe the leaves in green royal icing.



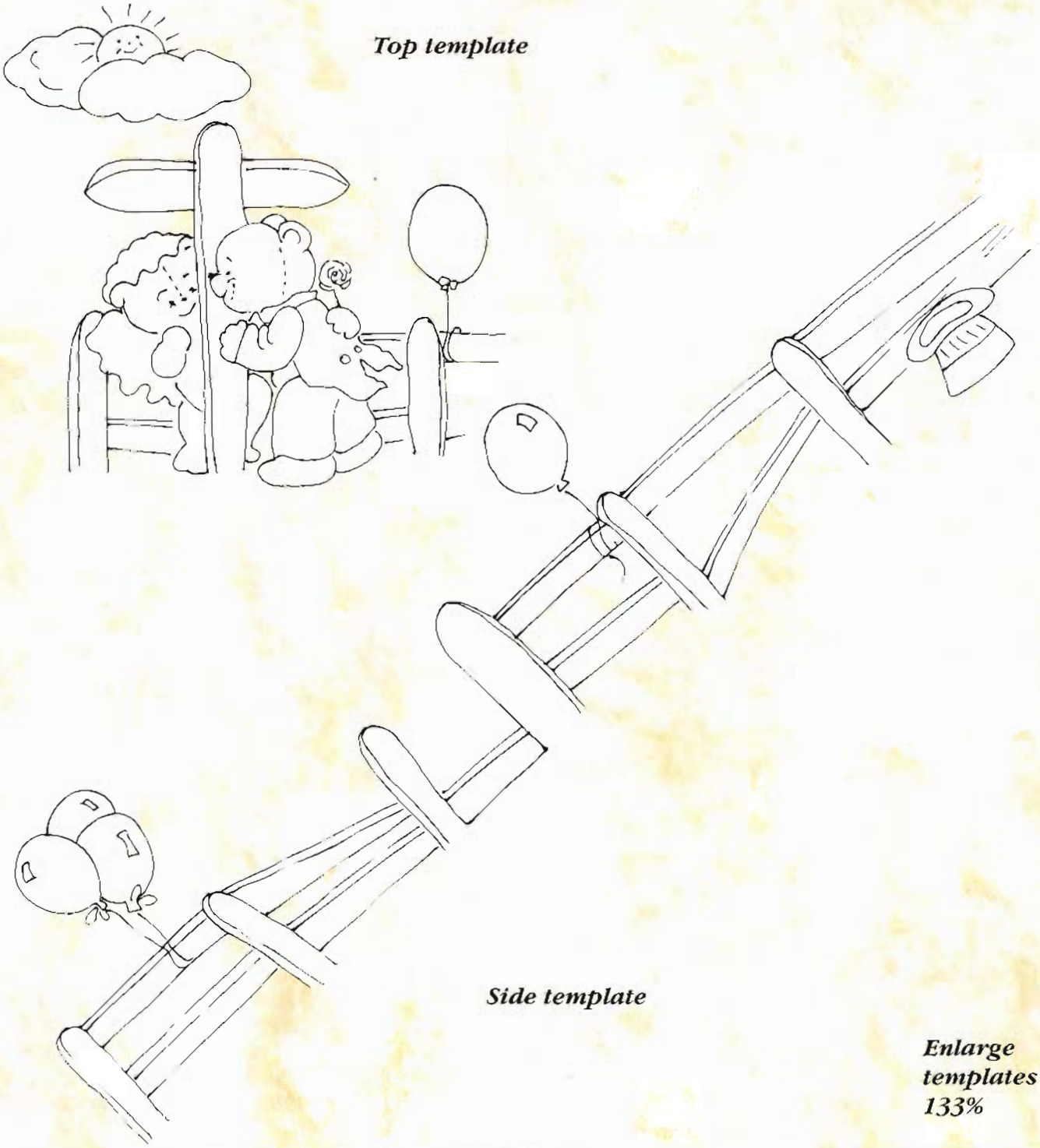
6 Piping a shell border: Pipe the shell border in white royal icing around the base and top of the cake. Use a no. 8 piping tube.

Love lane

TEMPLATE COLLECTION 47

***HOW TO USE YOUR TEMPLATES:** Lay a sheet of tracing paper over the various templates and trace on to the paper. You may find it easier if you then cut the paper so that each template is separate. Using a scriber, trace the template shapes on to the rolled marzipan or sugarpaste.*

Top template



Side template

Enlarge templates by 133%

Tube embroidery

A step-by-step guide to making this intricate, tube-embroidered flower in shades of blue, brown and warm peach.

HAVE TO HAND

Ingredients: *23cm x 10cm (9in x 4in) sugarpasted plaque • brown, blue and peach paste food colouring.*

Equipment: *several no. 0 or 1 piping tubes • greaseproof paper • piece of sponge • small pair of scissors • palette knife • fine paintbrush.*

Main skills: *using templates • piping embroidery.*

DIFFICULTY TIME SUITABILITY

This tube-embroidered design gives you the opportunity to develop your piping skills and to create a charming, detailed piece of work. It features a variety of stitches, in shades of blue, brown and peach, piped on to an oblong plaque which complements the proportions of the design.

COLOURING THE DESIGN

You will be making up seven shades of royal icing, and therefore it is helpful to have several piping tubes ready to hand so you can make up different colours at the same time. However, if you do not have many piping tubes, you can mix the colours as you go along. You will need to mix three shades of brown royal icing: light, medium, and dark. The design also requires a light and a dark blue, and a pale and a dark peach. When mixing your shades, make sure that they are not too similar. You could label the bags with a simple initial, so that you do not confuse your colours. No. 1 piping tubes are best for this design, but you can also use a no. 0 tube, if you feel confident enough. Before you begin, examine the picture carefully, noting the stitches and shading. It may seem complicated at first, but if approached systematically, it will soon take shape.

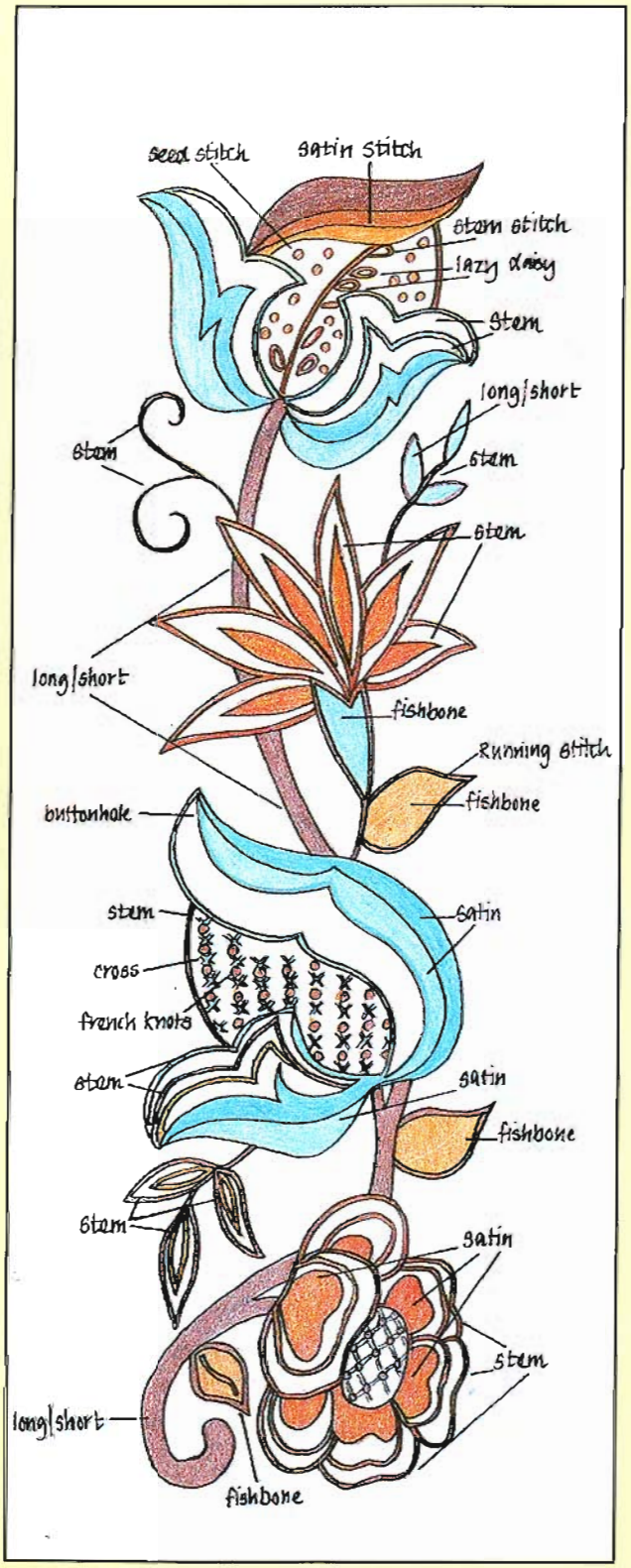
BEGINNING THE DESIGN

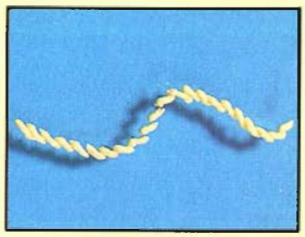
Before you begin scribing the template, the sugarpaste should have been drying for at least three days, so that the surface of the cake will not dent. Once you have started scribing, keep going until you have scribed the whole design. Then you are ready to start piping the embroidery. Follow the steps carefully, making sure that you leave each colour to dry before starting on the next. Keep a fine paintbrush to hand – you can use it to remove mistakes and to tuck in any wayward stitches.

DEVELOPING YOUR SKILLS

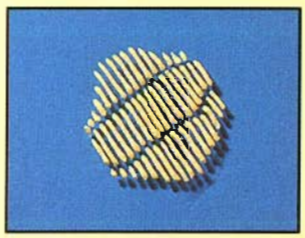
Once you have developed your embroidery skills, you will be able to make up your own designs, or borrow them from other sources. Tube embroidery works very well with flower and crest designs, but the enthusiast could go on to design other scenes – brightly coloured birds, for example. The difficulty is in judging which stitches should go where, but here we have carefully listed the colours and stitches used.

STITCHES

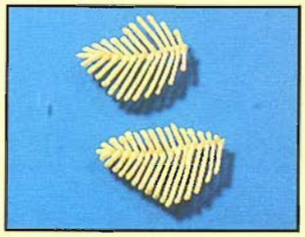




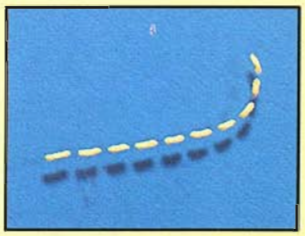
Stem stitch



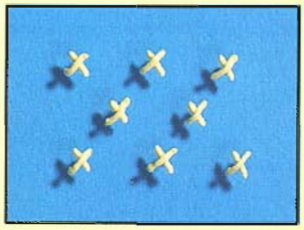
Satin stitch



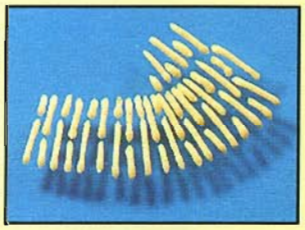
Fishbone stitch



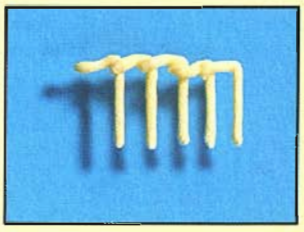
Running stitch



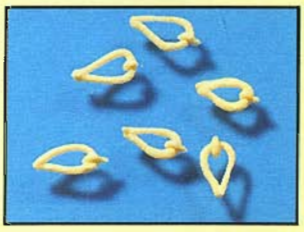
Cross stitch



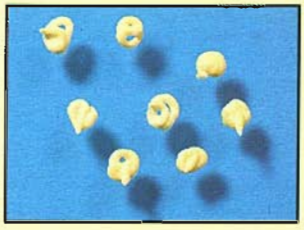
Long and short stitch



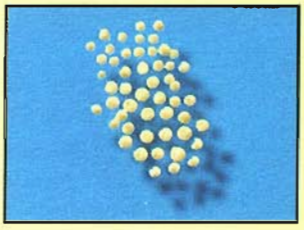
Buttonhole stitch



Lazy daisy stitch

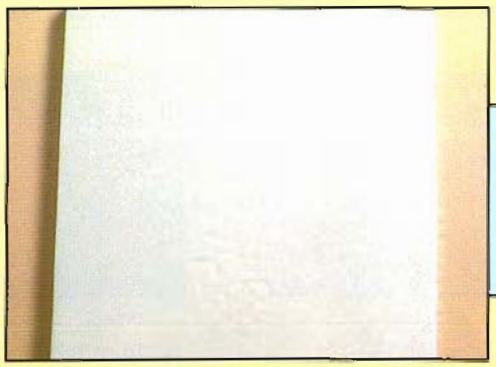


French knots



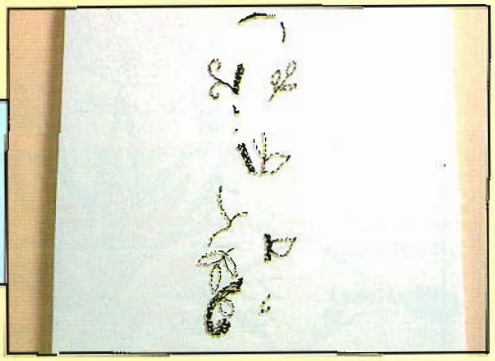
Seed stitch

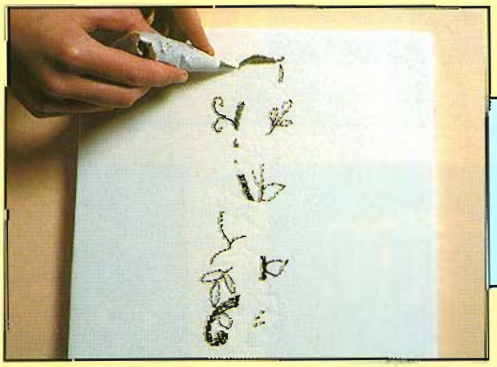
PIPING TUB



1 Scribing the template: Trace the template on to greaseproof paper and then scribe it on to the plaque. Use a piece of sponge to hold the template in place and to keep your hand off the sugarpaste.

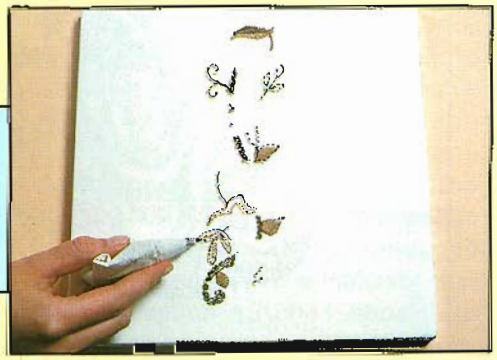
2 Beginning the embroidery: Using a no. 1 piping tube and dark brown icing, pipe in the areas outlined in the picture. This includes the stem of the flower, which gives structure to the design.





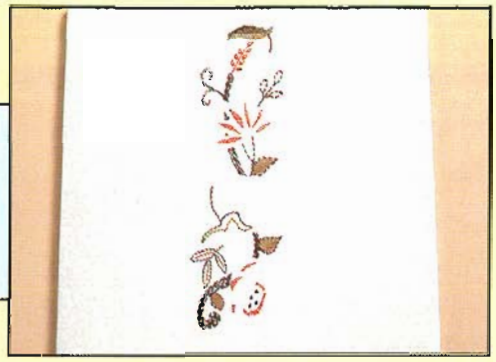
3 Adding shading: Pipe the area outlined in mid-brown. This is a tiny area on one of the leaves requiring satin stitch but the shading adds subtlety and delicacy to your work. Leave to dry for a few minutes.

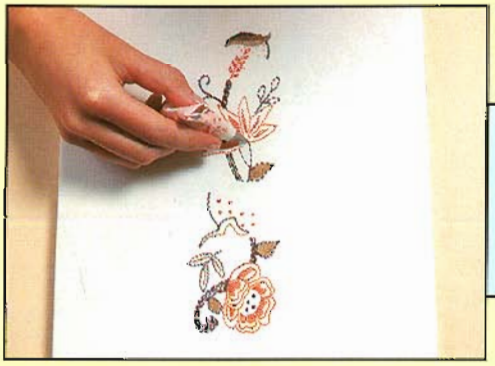
4 Piping the leaves: Use the light brown royal icing to pipe in the leaves in fishbone stitch. If the ends of a stitch are sticking out, gently push them down with a very fine paintbrush.



'MBROIDERY

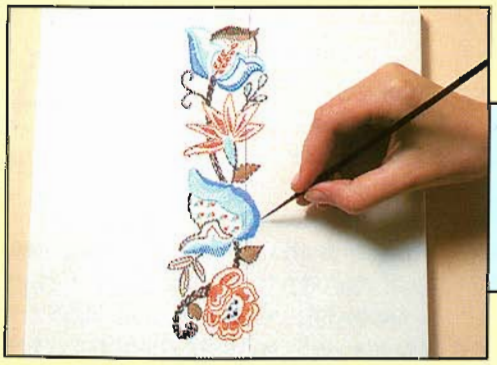
5 Piping the peach flowers: Starting at the top of the flower, pipe in the lazy daisy stitch in dark peach. Then pipe the inner petals of the two large lower flowers.





6 Using the pale peach icing: Now use the light peach icing to pipe the outer edges of the two large flowers in stem stitch. Keep the tips of the icing tubes clean and damp by placing on a damp cloth.

7 Piping petals in blue: Using the light blue royal icing, pipe in the inner parts of the petals outlined in stem and satin stitches. Light and dark blue areas can be transposed if you wish.



8 Finishing the embroidery: Using the remaining tube of dark blue icing, fill in the outer petals of the remaining flowers. Correct any small inaccuracies with a damp paintbrush, and then set aside to dry.

Tube embroidery

TEMPLATE COLLECTION 48

***HOW TO USE YOUR TEMPLATES:** Lay a sheet of tracing paper over the various templates and trace on to the paper. You may find it easier if you then cut the paper so that each template is separate. Using a scriber, trace the template shapes on to the rolled marzipan or sugarpaste.*

New Year cake

HAVE TO HAND

Ingredients: *9cm (3 in) round fruit cake • plain marzipan • egg white • sugarpaste • green, gold (optional), black, red, orange, yellow and brown paste food colouring • moss green and orange petal dust.*

Equipment: *no. 1 icing tube • 10cm (4in) round cake card • block of wood • aluminium foil • polystyrene blocks • 1 ping pong ball • small sharp knife or modelling tool • holly leaf cutter.*

Main skills: *modelling with marzipan • working with sugarpaste.*

DIFFICULTY	TIME	SUITABILITY
✓ ✓	⧗ ⧗	🍒

This clock makes an ideal novelty cake to usher in the New Year. Set the hands at midnight and let the celebrations begin!

A most appropriate cake for a special New Year's celebration, this is also an ideal cake for lovers of marzipan. The rich fruit cake is completely coated with marzipan and sugarpaste. It is also decorated with marzipan clock hands and golden clock accessories, but although these are made with marzipan and coloured with gold food colouring, they should not be eaten because gold food colouring is, in fact, inedible. The cake is also supported by little marzipan feet, and stands on a foil-coated block of wood which sits on top of a round cake card.

CHOOSING A COLOUR

Don't worry if you find a gold cake card difficult to find – you can just as easily use a silver-covered one painted with gold food colouring. Alternatively, you could change the whole colour scheme and make all the clock's gold accessories silver instead. The cake card can then be cut from a circle of cardboard and covered with foil, or you could even use an upturned plate covered with aluminium foil.

A SPECIAL OCCASION

The cake is also suitable for use as a birthday cake. You could set the hands to the age of the recipient – 10 o'clock for a 10 year old, for example. The holly decoration is festive and seasonally appropriate for a New Year's cake, but for a different occasion, you might decide to make ivy leaves out of sugarpaste, or even create a floral decoration to wind around the clock.

PROFESSIONAL SECRETS

Making holly leaves and berries

- Roll out some green sugarpaste very thinly. Cut out leaf shapes with a holly leaf cutter.
- Score veins on the leaves with a small knife or modelling tool.
- Crumple a piece of tin foil and place leaves to dry on top. They will develop natural-looking curved shapes as they dry.
- When dry, brush leaves with orange and moss-green petal dust. To create natural tones, use a dry paintbrush.
- Colour marzipan red and form into small holly berries.
- Allow to dry, then attach the leaves and berries individually around the top and base of the clock, using dabs of royal icing.

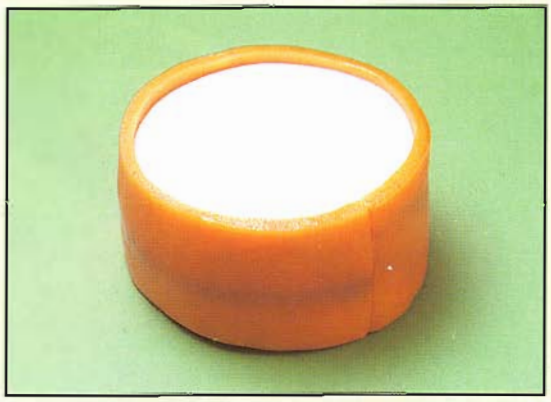
helpline

marbling marzipan

A subtle marbled effect is achieved first by rolling several small balls of plain marzipan. Put a drop of different colour in each and knead well to mix in the colour completely. For this cake we have used orange, yellow and brown. When you have made three coloured balls, combine them and knead gently together. Do not mix the colours completely, just do it until you have a soft, marbled effect. For a more dramatic effect, add strong colours directly to the marzipan, placing the drops in random fashion, then knead as before.

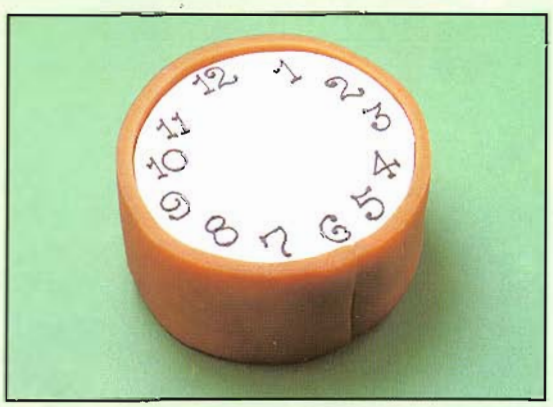
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Covering the cake: *Coat the cake with marzipan. Cover the top and base with white sugarpaste and stick to marzipan with egg white. Cover the sides of the clock with marbled marzipan as shown.*



1

Piping the numbers: *Use the template provided to scribe the numbers on to the face of the clock. Pipe over the scribed numbers in black-coloured royal icing using a no. 1 piping tube.*



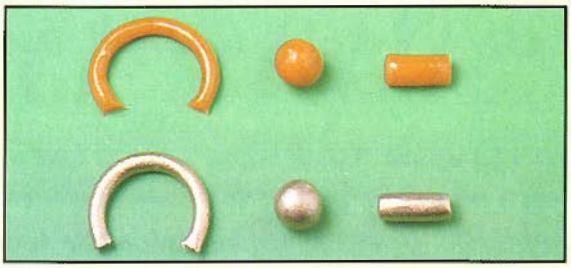
2

Making the alarm bells: *Thinly roll out some sugarpaste, cut out two circles, and use them to line two halves of a ping-pong ball. Allow to dry. Remove from ping-pong ball, and paint in gold or silver.*

3

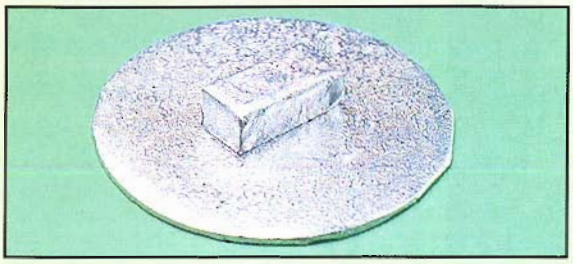
Clock hands: *Make two thin rolls, one a little longer than the other, from black marzipan. Also make two teardrop shapes for the pointers and a small disc for the centre.*

4



Bell supports, feet, and handle: *Roll out a marzipan sausage. Make two lengths to support the bells, two as feet, and two small balls. Make handle and bend into shape. Allow to dry.*

5



Cake board: *Cover a small block of wood with foil. Cover cake card to match. If you can't get gold foil, use silver and paint with gold food colouring. Paint bell supports, feet, and handle.*

6

Assembling the clock: *When the paint work is dry, sit the clock on its prepared block and secure it with royal icing. If necessary support it on polystyrene blocks until it sets.*

7

Attaching the handle: *Attach the handle, bell supports, and feet with royal icing. Attach the alarm bells and the clock hand with royal icing and leave to dry.*

8

Making the holly leaves: *Make the leaves from green sugarpaste and the berries from red marzipan. (See Professional Secrets, page 588). Arrange and attach them to the clock.*

9

New Year cake

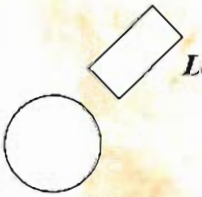
TEMPLATE COLLECTION 49

***HOW TO USE YOUR TEMPLATES:** Lay a sheet of tracing paper over the various templates and trace on to the paper. You may find it easier if you then cut the paper so that each template is separate. Using a scriber, trace the template shapes on to the rolled marzipan or sugarpaste.*

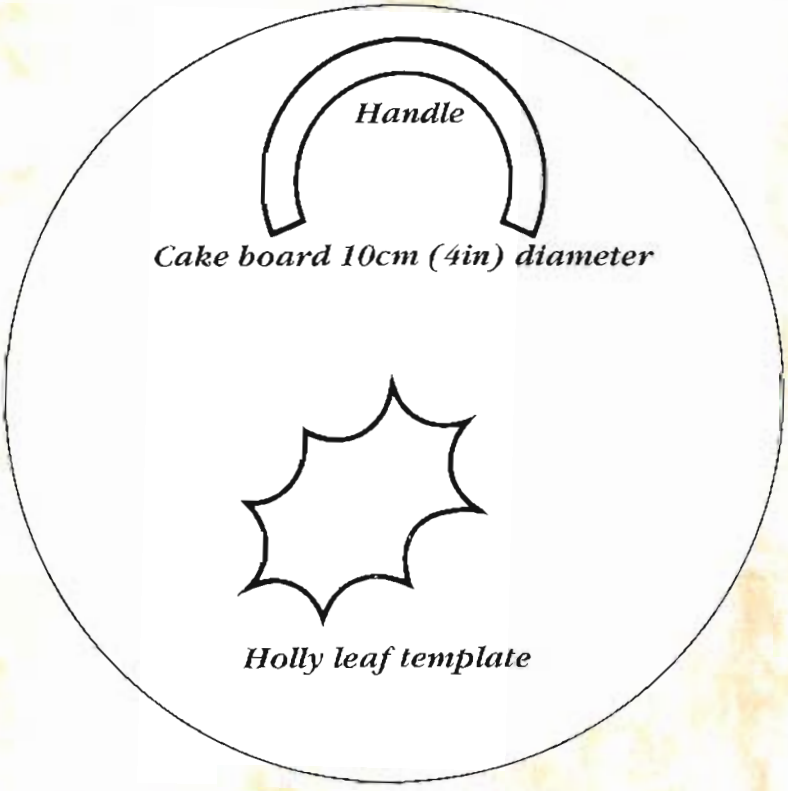
Clock diameter 8cm (3in)

Numerals for clock face

Clock hands



Legs



Cake board 10cm (4in) diameter

Holly leaf template

Airbrush techniques

An airbrush allows you to achieve effects in cake decorating using food colouring that it would be impossible to reproduce by painting. The fine, delicate spray produces a unique and very attractive result.

HAVE TO HAND

Ingredients: food colourings.

Equipment: airbrush • cans of aerosol propellant or miniature electric compressor • paper and card • paper doyleys • cotton wool • steel straight edge or ruler • masking tape • round-headed pins.

Main skill: airbrushing techniques.

DIFFICULTY	TIME	SUITABILITY
✓ ✓ ✓	⧗ ⧗ ⧗	

The airbrush, perhaps more familiar as an artist's tool, is also used to good effect in advanced cake-decorating techniques. It is a pen-like instrument through which a mixture of food colouring (in the case of cake decorating) and compressed air is forced to produce a spray of tiny droplets. In more sophisticated models, you can control the amount of food colour which is mixed in, so varying the intensity of the colour simply by use of a lever. In simpler models, the only way to do this is by altering the distance between the airbrush and the working surface.

The simplest and cheapest way of supplying the compressed air is by means of an aerosol can of propellant. However, for a supply which will not run out suddenly and without notice, as happens with an aerosol, a miniature electric compressor can be used.

As the equipment required for airbrushing is expensive, it is only worth investing in if you think you will have sufficient cake-decorating projects to warrant the initial outlay.

DIFFERENT EFFECTS

You can achieve some very interesting effects with an airbrush. The background to a painted scene, where airbrushing is used to suggest the foreground and sky in a misty kind of way, and the details of the scene are then painted in afterwards, is perhaps the most obvious example. Airbrushing used in this way can reproduce an almost photographic effect.

CREATING PATTERNS

However, an airbrush is a versatile tool, and you can also use it to spray all sorts of patterns, using masks and stencils – such as a piece of paper with a torn edge – or a paper doily. With practice, you can spray lettering and inscriptions, as well as straight and curved lines.

Varying the distance of the airbrush from the surface also varies the effect. You can achieve a more intense colour by holding the airbrush close to the cake. Pull it away gradually to produce a softer, lighter tone. A line sprayed with the airbrush close to the surface will be finer and deeper in colour than one sprayed with the airbrush held a little distance away from the cake.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

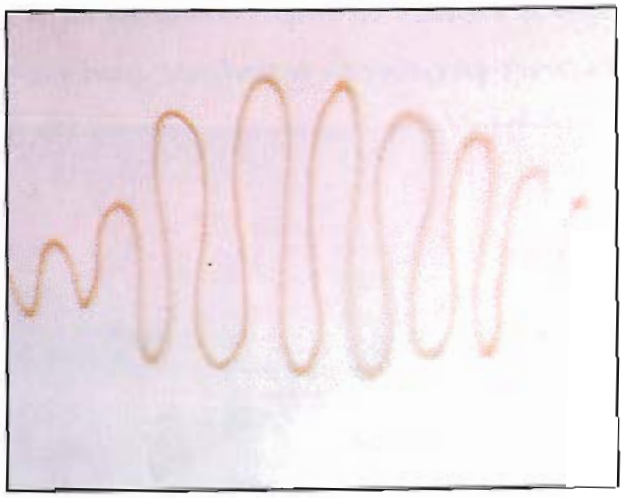
Airbrush work requires plenty of practice for good results. This is the only way to learn how to control the flow of food colouring and to obtain an even effect on your finished cake. Once you have achieved this, you will find an airbrush a very worthwhile investment.

SPRAYING LINES

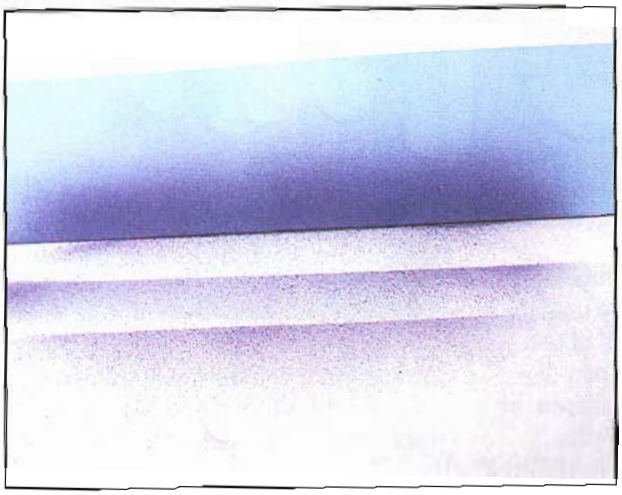
PROFESSIONAL SECRETS

Points to remember

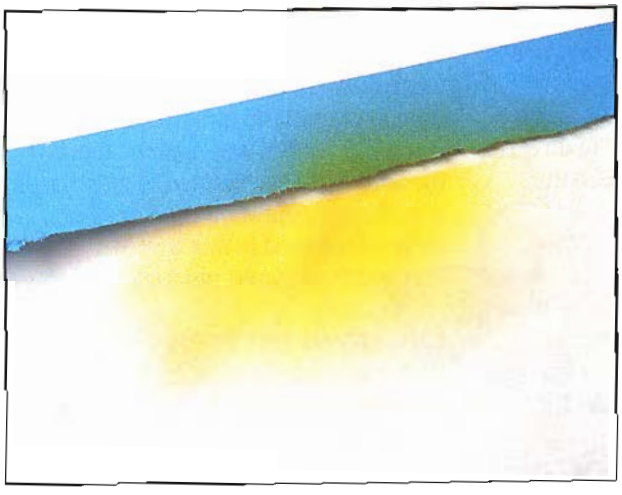
- Always stop the flow of food colouring before you turn off the air supply to your airbrush. Failure to do this can cause spattering and spoil the effect.
- Clean the airbrush thoroughly with warm water after every session, to prevent clogging and a build-up of residue.
- Rinse the airbrush through with warm water in between colour changes to make sure that the colours remain true.
- Check that the needle in the nozzle is straight. A bent needle produces uneven, spattered colour, and the only solution is to replace it.
- Hold the airbrush just as you would a pen or pencil, and make sure your wrist is in a position to allow free and even movement as you spray.
- When the aerosol can of propellant runs out, the pressure drops suddenly and without warning, and the colour dries up in a shower of spatters. So, if you are airbrushing anything important with a lot of work on it, it is best to use a new can. Save much-used cans for practising with to avoid disaster on a cake.



1 Curved lines: Practise making squiggly lines, holding the airbrush close to the surface to make them thin, further away for a broader width. Once you have mastered controlling the flow of colour when doing this, you are ready to move on to making inscriptions. Aim for a continuous flowing script, executed in a single movement.

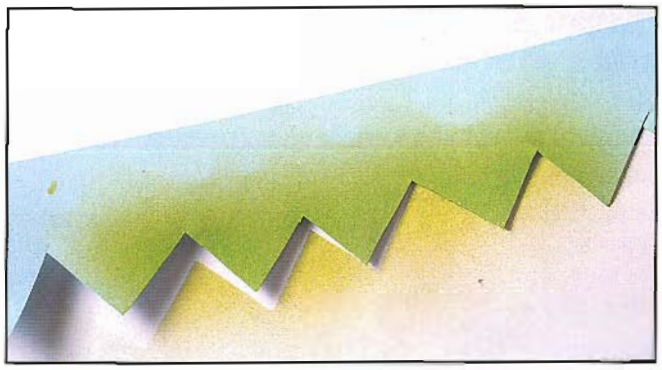


2 Straight lines: Using a steel straight edge, a ruler, or the cut edge of a stiff piece of paper, you can spray a series of lines. Keep the airbrush close to the paper to make the hard edge. Soften the tone by lifting the airbrush further away from the paper.

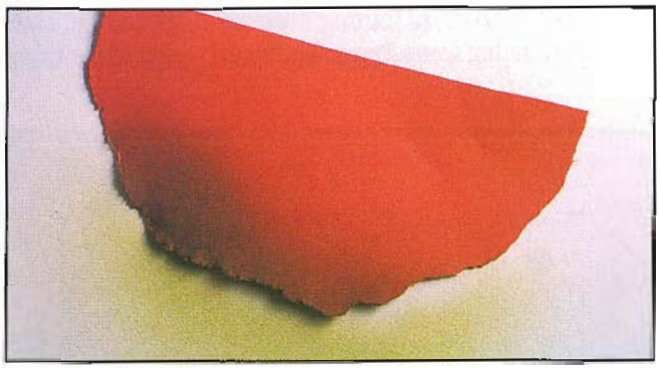


3 Soft edges: If you want a softer edge to your straight line, tear your piece of paper rather than cut it. Then use it as a mask and spray a broad, even band of colour along the torn edge of the paper.

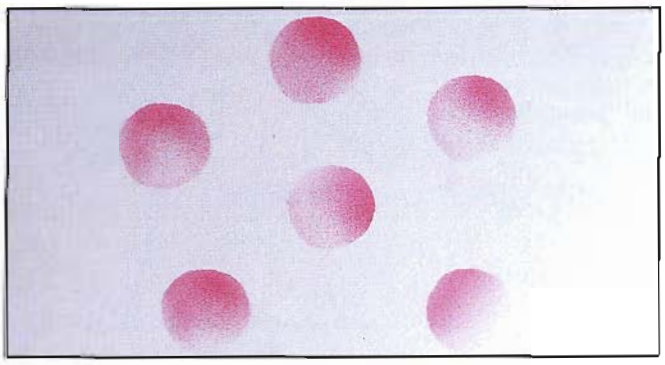
SPRAYING SHAPES



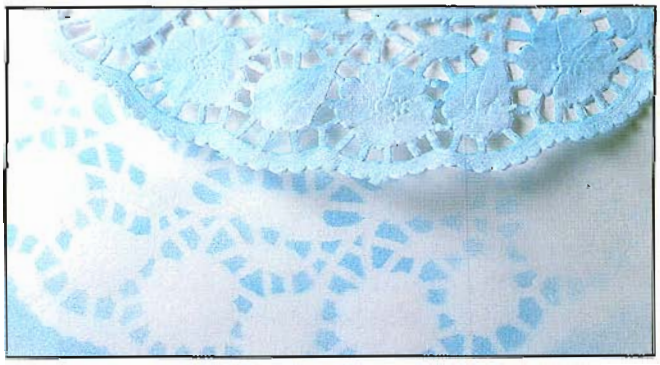
1 Patterns with masks: Cut the edge of a strip of paper into a pattern of your choice. Use this mask to spray a pattern, either on the sides of the cake, or around the top edge.



2 Curved edges: A curved, soft edge is produced by tearing a piece of paper to shape. Hold it loosely on the surface so the force of the spray lifts the paper, blurring the edges.



3 Stencilling 1: Cut your shape from a piece of card and spray through it. Here, the small circles produce spots of colour, given a spherical effect by graduating the spray.



4 Stencilling 2: Spraying through a paper doily gives an attractive lacy effect. Use it to cover the top of a round cake, or cut out sections to make smaller motifs on the cake sides.

5 Small masks: These can be dislodged by the force of the spray. Hold shapes such as these small flowers in place with round-headed pins, removing them when the spray dries.

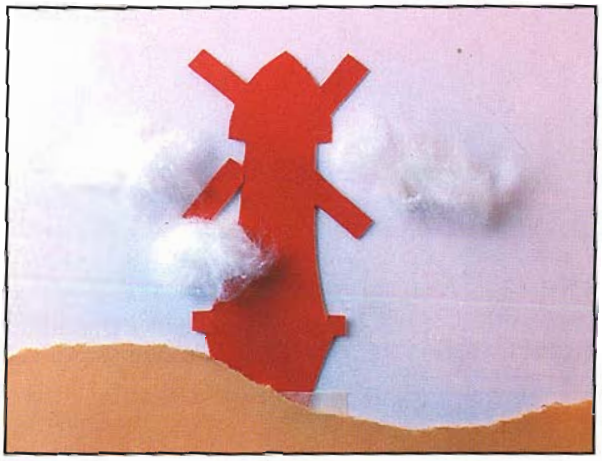
6 Cotton-wool mask: Use this to produce soft edges; it is particularly useful for cloud outlines. Secure with small pieces of masking tape, either at the sides or underneath.

CREATING A PICTURE WITH AN AIRBRUSH

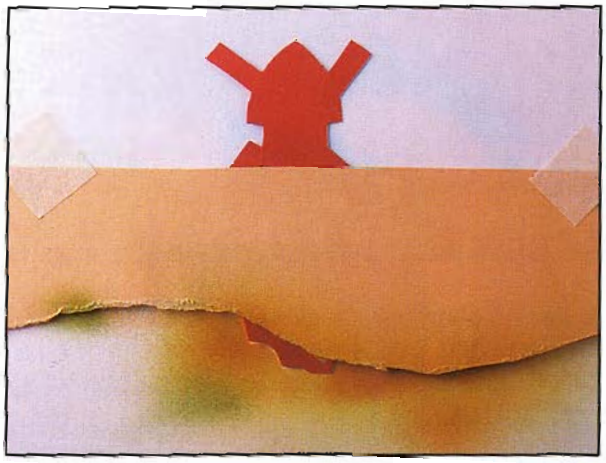
To create a picture, scene or landscape on top of a cake, you need to be quite proficient in holding your airbrush, and know the different effects you can obtain with it. Practice spraying, using masks of different types, before starting work on an important big scene for a cake. For your first attempts, you may want to work on a runout plaque rather than directly on to the cake itself. Then, if you make a mistake, you can start again.

Select your scene first and then copy or trace it. Transfer your drawing to the top of the cake, and then make masks for the main areas which do not require spraying – such as buildings, like the windmill below.

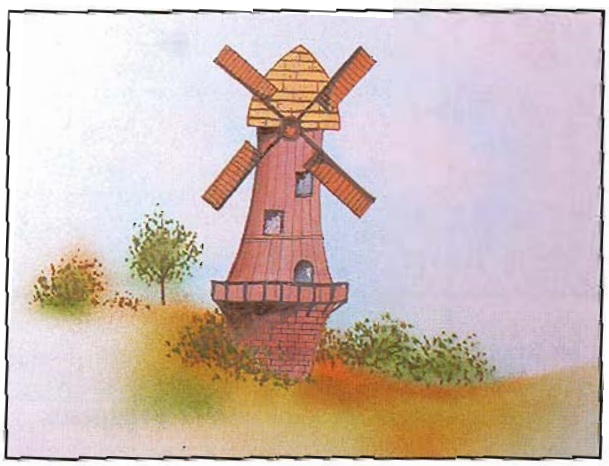
Decide on the best order for spraying; make masks for areas of the background and foreground which will need covering at some stage.



1 The sky: Secure the windmill mask in position on the cake with masking tape. Add cotton wool, secured in the same way, for the clouds. Use a torn paper mask for the ground level. Spray the sky blue, making it darker nearer the ground and fading it out near the top of the windmill. When dry, remove the cotton wool and ground-level masks.

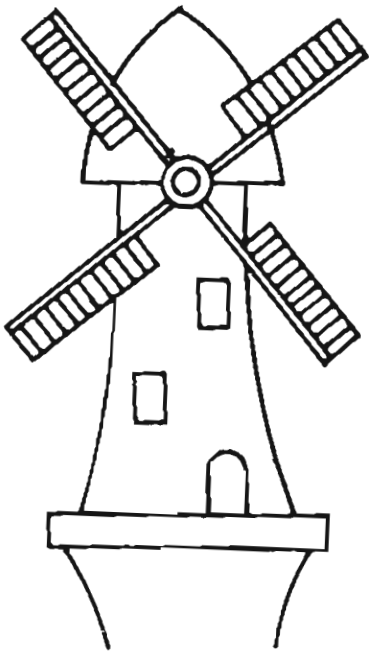


2 The ground: Leave the windmill mask in position. Using the remaining half of the ground-level paper mask, blank out the sky area, matching the edge of the mask to the sprayed edge. Spray green, brown and orange tones to represent the grass and the shrubs. Graduate the colour, making it darker near the mask.



3 Painting details: When the spray is completely dry, remove the windmill and ground-level mask. Complete the picture using food colouring and a fine paintbrush to create the detail of the windmill's roof, timber work, brick base and sails. Then paint in the trees and bushes, making them quite small to give the right scale to the windmill.

Windmill template



Alternatives

STENCILLED WINDMILL

If you wish, you can use the windmill template as a stencil. Simply trace it on to greaseproof paper, then scribe the design on to a piece of card. Cut the windmill shape out of the card using a scalpel. Make sure you cut in the direction away from yourself. You can then spray the stencil as a single colour and paint in the appropriate details with a fine paintbrush.

Crown ornament

What better way to show off your skills than by making this delicate runout crown, ideal for decorating a wedding cake? It will display your command of piping runouts, piping filigree, and piping on tulle.

HAVE TO HAND

Ingredients: *white royal icing (soft peak and run icing consistency).*

Equipment: *no. 1 icing tube • wax paper • cartridge paper • cardboard tubes • fine tulle • 6 small polystyrene blocks.*

Main skills: *piping runouts • piping filigree • piping on tulle.*

DIFFICULTY TIME SUITABILITY

This delicate runout crown is a project for the experienced decorator to tackle. It makes a strikingly pretty cake-top decoration for a wedding cake. Formed in an hexagonal shape, it has runout sections for the sides, backed by finely piped filigree. The runouts for the points of the crown are backed with tulle as they have to be flexible enough to bend into shape. Shell piping provides a fine edging to the whole crown.

Before starting work, trace the templates provided, copying each one several times on to cartridge paper. Copy the base hexagon once only. Tape the traced templates to your work surface and secure a piece of wax paper on top.

HOLDING THE SHAPE

Prepare the royal icing very carefully. The consistency is important, particularly in the case of the curved points of the crown. These have to be shaped as soon as they have been piped, and this means that the consistency is vital – if it is not firm enough, the runouts will not hold their shape, and if it is too hard, there is a danger of the sections cracking.

Place the finished crown on top of your cake and use it as a container for a tiny flower arrangement. If it suits your colour scheme, you could colour the icing used for the solid runout with just a touch of food colouring. Pipe the filigree work in white, to match the tulle lying underneath it.

If you make the crown for a cake for some other special occasion, consider using alternative colour schemes. You could colour the runouts and filigree work in an appropriate pastel shade, or dye the tulle with paste or liquid food colouring, so that it shows as just a hint of colour underneath white filigree work.

tip

POLYSTYRENE BLOCKS

Save the moulded polystyrene used for packaging household goods and cut into small blocks with a serrated bread knife.

helpline

POINTS TO WATCH

The icing for the outline of a runout should be of soft peak consistency. Use double-strength dried egg albumen or egg whites to make the icing; this will make it stronger once it has dried. Don't add lemon juice or glycerine, as this will soften it.

The run icing used to fill in the outline needs to be soft enough to flow evenly out of the piping tube and be levelled with the help of a fine paintbrush, while still holding its shape.

For piping the filigree work, the icing should be of a stiff peak consistency; that is, when a wooden spoon is drawn out of the mixture, it forms a fine, sharp peak.

Leave the icing to stand overnight, covered with a damp cloth, to allow air bubbles to surface. Stir before use.

Once you start filling in a runout outline, work quickly. This is to avoid partial drying, which would spoil the finished effect.

When drying the curved runout sections, you can use the cardboard tube from the inside of a roll of greaseproof paper as a former. Make sure the sections are put in a safe place to dry out, away from the prying hands of small children.

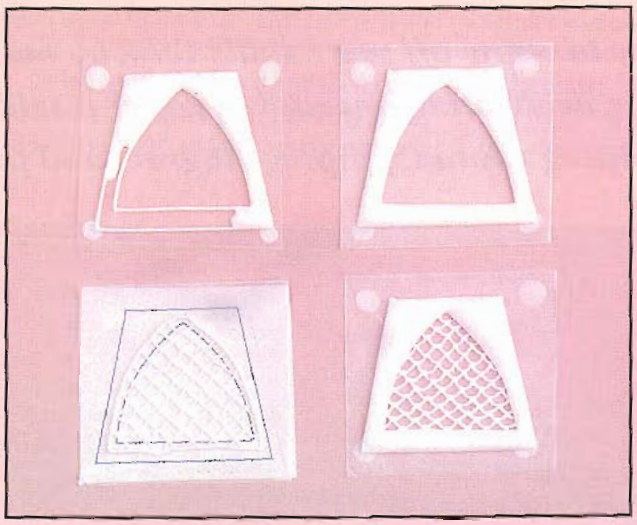
Make several extra pieces of each runout section required. Runouts are fragile, and it is all too easy to shatter a piece accidentally while assembling the decoration.

Allow plenty of time for making the crown decoration, as all the sections need to be thoroughly dry before they can be assembled.

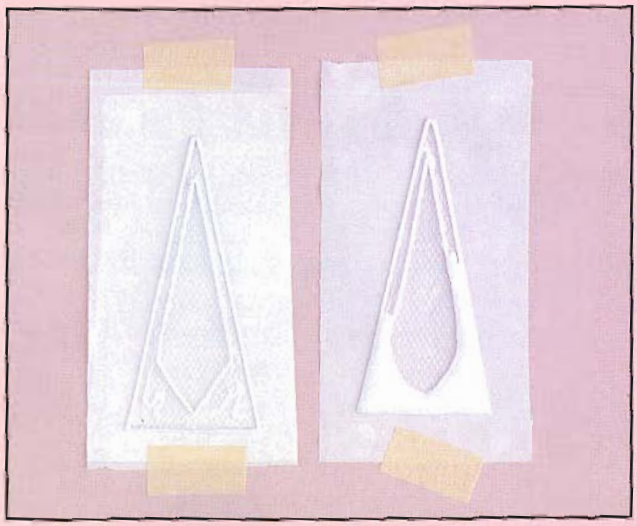
Do not attach the crown decoration to the wedding cake until it has reached its final destination. Transport the crown in its own small cake box. Place it on top of a thin layer of foam to prevent it from moving around, and surround it with tissue paper.

As an added precaution, you may wish to make two crowns in case one is damaged during tranportation. The second one can then be filled with the flowers in the event of an accident, or saved for future use.

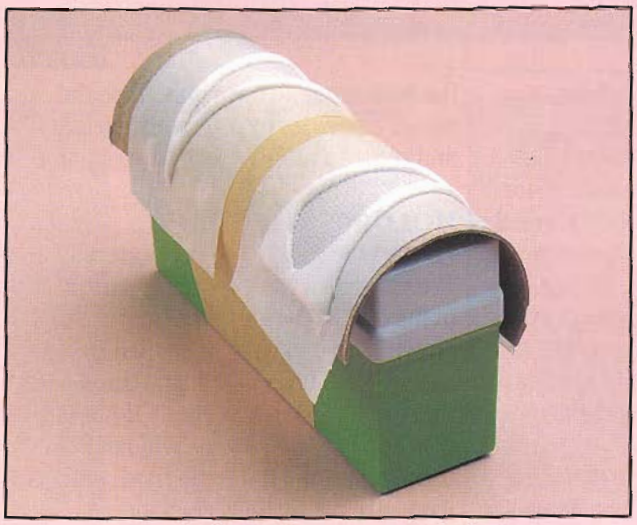
MAKING A CROWN ORNAMENT



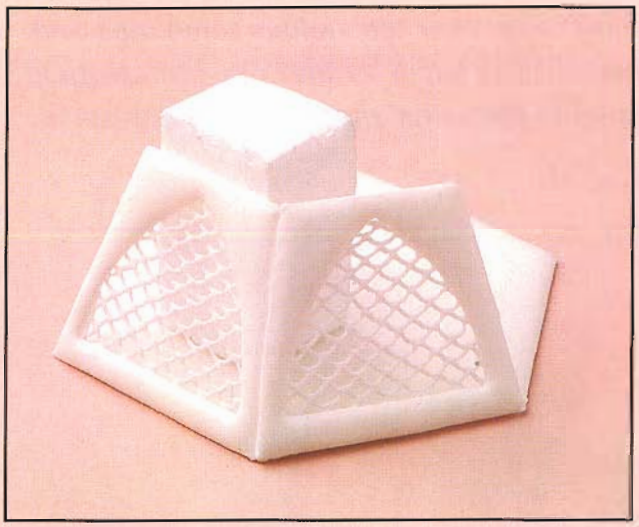
1 Making the side runouts: Outline the side pieces with a no. 1 tube and white royal icing. Flood with white run-icing. Using a no. 1 tube, outline and pipe scalloped net filigree. Immediately place a prepared runout section over the top of the filigree and gently press together. Repeat for all six sections. Make a plain hexagonal runout to form the base of the crown.



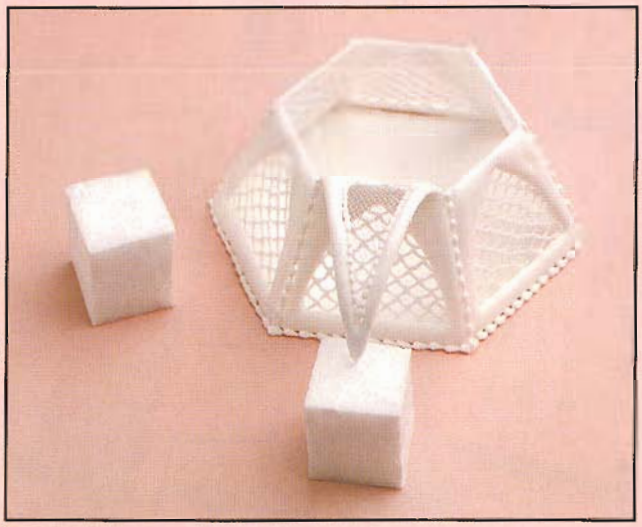
2 Preparing the crown points: Trace the template provided, place it on six layers of tulle and then cut around the template, making sure that you cut through both the template and all the layers of tulle at the same time. Secure to waxed paper, over tracing, using dots of royal icing. Outline and flood in white royal icing.



3 Shaping the points: Gently curve the triangles over cardboard tubes which have been cut in half vertically and fixed securely to a firm base. Dry the runouts under a lamp, then, using a no. 1 tube, pipe a tiny shell edging on the inside edge of each runout, next to the tulle.



4 Assembling the crown: Using royal icing, attach the six runout side pieces to the hexagonal base. Use small blocks of polystyrene to support the pieces until they are completely dry.



5 Adding the points: Attach the six curved points of the crown to the top of the side pieces with royal icing. Support the points on blocks of polystyrene until they are completely dry. Use a no. 1 tube to pipe a tiny shell design around the edges and joins.

6 Completing the crown: When the crown is fully dry, carefully place an arrangement of artificial, silk, or paste flowers inside it. Centre the crown on top of the cake, and attach it with dabs of royal icing.

DESIGN TOUCH

An elaborate runout decoration like this crown is most likely to be used on the top tier of a wedding cake. In this case, the floral decoration in the centre can tie in with the floral theme of the wedding, or with the decoration on the bride's dress. However, the crown could equally well be used as a finishing touch on cakes for other occasions. It could then be made in a pastel colour to match the cake, or you might like to emphasize the crown shape with gold petal dust. The decoration placed inside the crown does not necessarily have to be floral – vary it to suit the occasion.

If the crown is used to top an engagement cake, place an open decorative box holding the engagement ring inside. For a birthday cake, place a tiny wrapped gift box inside.

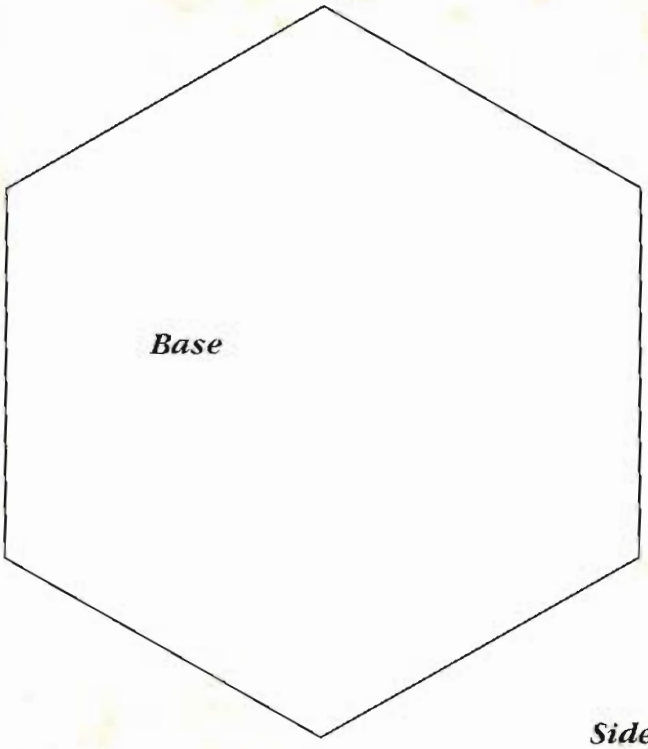
When used on top of a christening cake or a cake for a newborn baby, the crown could hold a tiny fluffy toy or animal, or one made out of paste.

The curved points of the crown are reminiscent of an opening flower bud, and so you could also use it as a container for one exquisite flower head. This could be a real one, or be moulded out of flower paste.

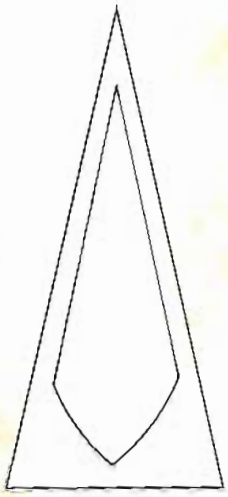
Crown ornament

TEMPLATE COLLECTION 50

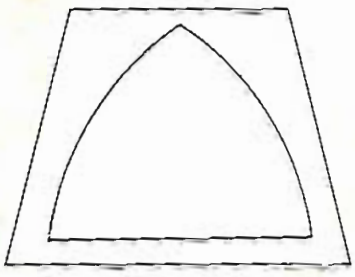
HOW TO USE YOUR TEMPLATES: *Lay a sheet of tracing paper over the various templates and trace on to the paper. You may find it easier if you then cut the paper so that each template is separate. Using a scriber, trace the template shapes on to the rolled marzipan or sugarpaste.*



Base



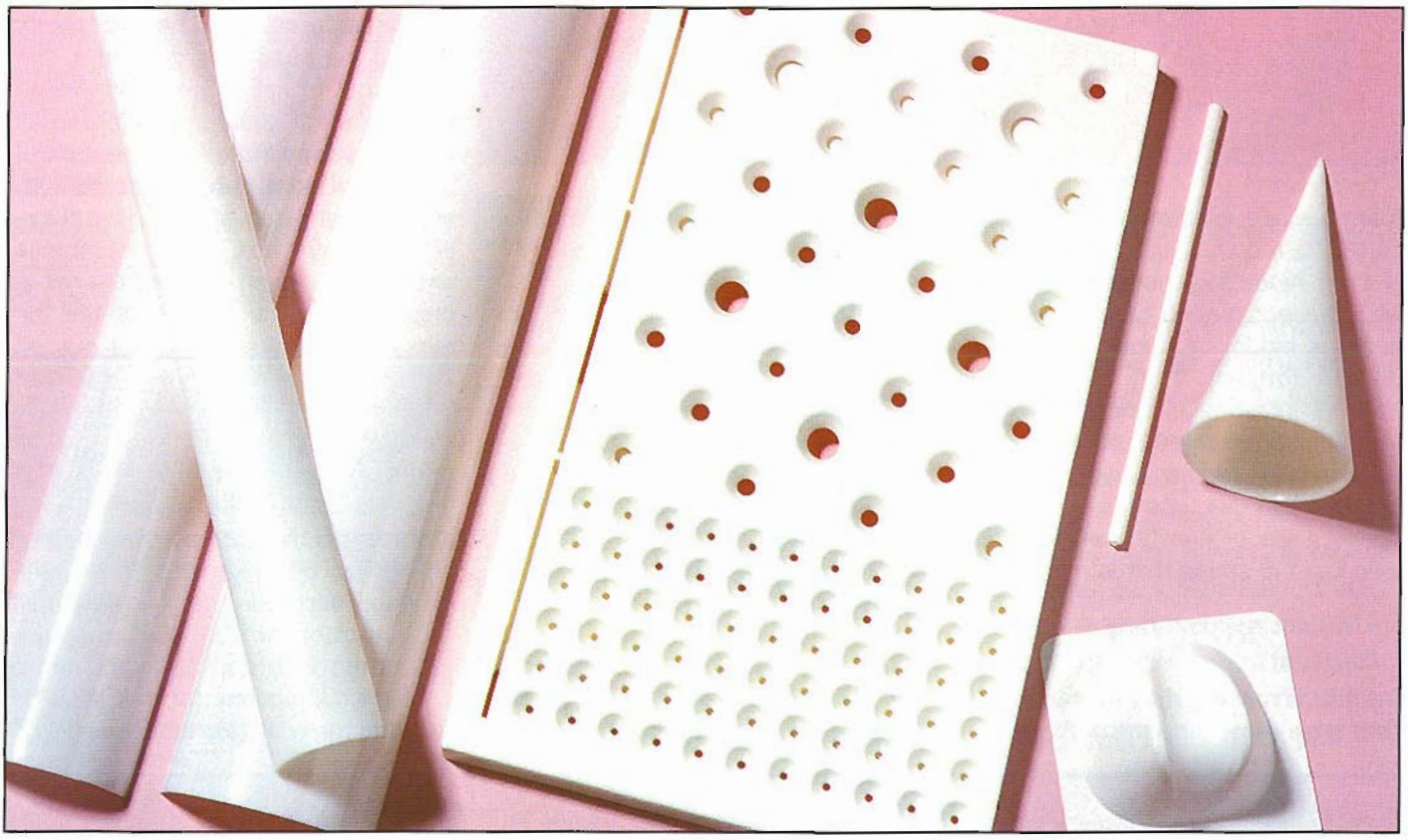
Points - make 6



Sides - make 6

Formers

With imagination, formers – either shop bought or home-made – can be used to form strong, natural shapes in cake decoration.



The pliable material used in sugarcraft – usually sugarpaste and flower paste – often has to be supported until it dries out or sets hard into the shape required. These supports are called formers. They can either be hand-made from the everyday bits and pieces that are found in the kitchen, or be commercial holders designed for specific jobs.

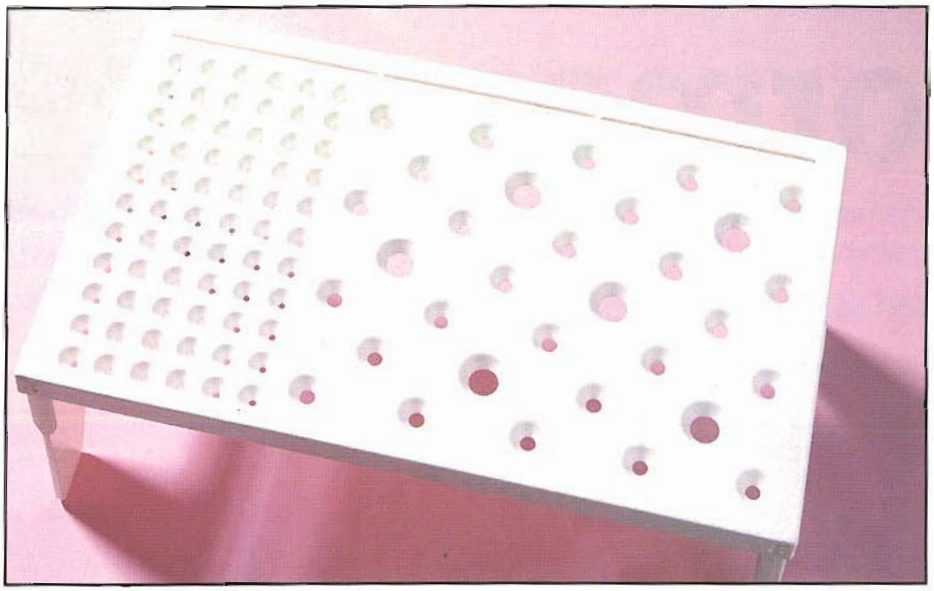
COMMERCIAL FORMERS

Commercial formers for flower modelling have only recently become available through the sugarcraft shops. One of the first formers to be developed was for the throat of an orchid, which needs to curve from front to back as well as from side to side while it dries out. These are readily available from specialist cake-decoration suppliers.

As floral sugarcraft became progressively more popular, and the flowers attempted much more adventurous and lifelike, a need developed for supports which would hold petals in different shapes until they had dried and could be assembled into flower heads. To this end, various plastic flower holders and stands are now available to hold both the petals as they dry and to assemble the completed flower in a particular shape. Cone-shaped formers are also available, for modelling Christmas trees.

HOME MADE FORMERS

When none of these special formers were available, enterprising sugarcraft enthusiasts would create their own tools from a variety of materials. Cooking foil will hold its shape when twisted or scrunched; or formers have been cut out of drinks' cans, which are slightly more durable. Apple trays and egg cartons can also be pressed into use for assembly and shaping sugarcraft work. For unusual shapes,



Perforated plastic tray holds finished flowers or petals in shape until dry.

foam sponge is useful as it can be carved as required with a sharp knife.

Craft modelling materials that set with the application of a little heat. such as modelling dough, make very durable formers. They are ideal for azaleas or hibiscus where a slightly unusual form is required. However, household items may also be pressed into use, and the curves of a sherry glass or bun tin may well provide just the shape that is required.

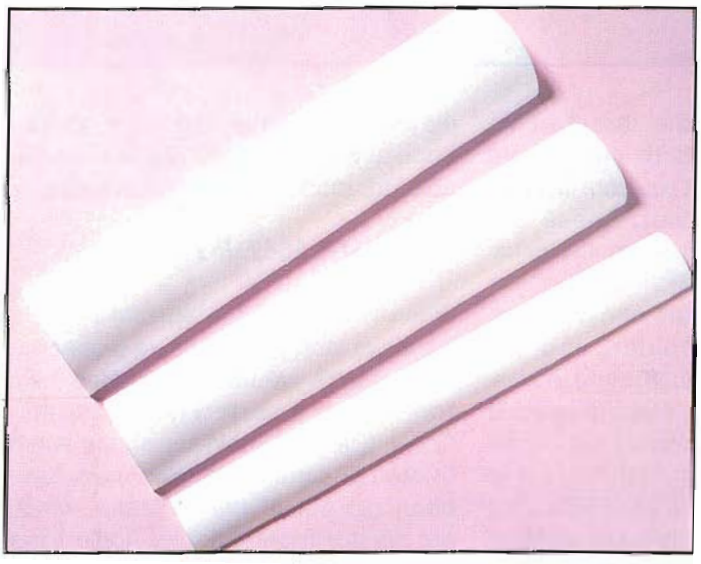
RUNOUTS

Another cake-decorating technique that sometimes needs a former is royal-icing flood work, when curved shapes are set on a former to dry. For simple curves, lightweight plastic half-round sections are available from cake-decorating supply shops. Or, if you know a friendly plumber, you could beg some offcuts of the heavy-grade plastic pipes used in his trade, and cut them down horizontally. Cardboard tubes can also be used.

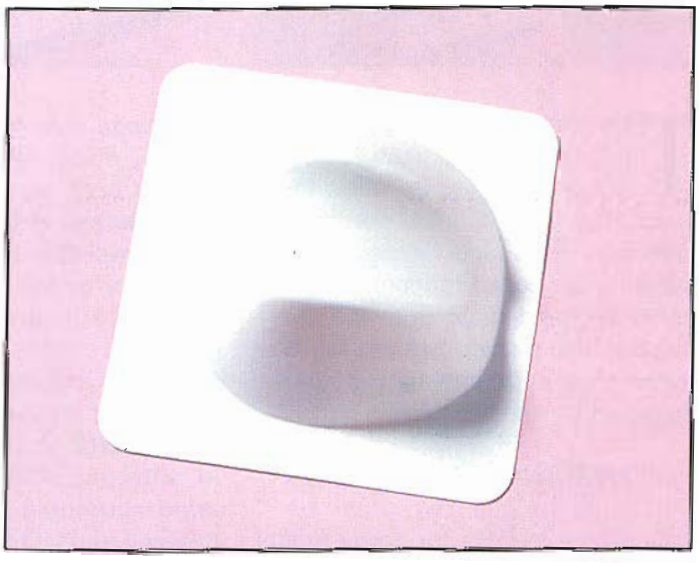
If using plastic piping, wax paper or runout film can either be attached to the pipe with masking tape, or else the pipe is greased, which will then hold the paper or film taut against the pipe's surface. If you are attempting this type of flooding pattern, remember that the icing needs to be a little stiffer than for flat surfaces.

COTTON NET MODELS

Another use for formers of different styles is the making of cotton net models. For this technique, cotton net is dipped in a sugar solution which is made from three parts sugar to one part water. and heated together until the sugar has dissolved. The cotton net is cut to size and dipped into the warm liquid solution, and all the excess moisture is squeezed out of the material before it is formed around a greased shape – for example a bell, ring box, shoe, or umbrella shape. The grease will hold the net in place around the outside of the former until the material dries out. At this stage the grease can be liquefied – a hair drier is useful just to blow warm air over it – and the shape will come away from the former. The sugar solution will have acted as a stiffener for the net and the resulting shape can be made into a delightful cake-top decoration for a celebration cake. Cotton net shapes are often decorated with cornelli work. More detailed instructions for this scan be found in many sugarcraft books.



Half-round plastic sections come in varying sizes to give runouts, filigree work and other items the desired curve.



Former for an orchid throat enables the complicated curvature of the flower to be produced exactly.

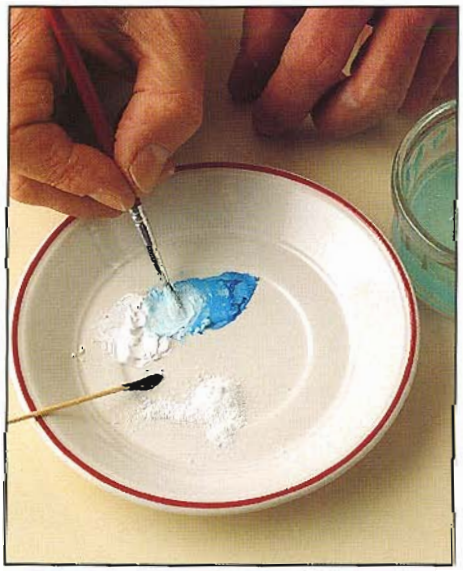
ALL THE TERMS AND TECHNIQUES OF CAKE DECORATING

MIXED PEEL

A mixture of dried peel consisting mainly of citrus fruit – oranges and lemons – cut small and sugar-glazed. Often used as an ingredient in fruit cakes to add flavour.

MIXING BOWLS

Vessels for mixing together ingredients of a cake prior to baking. Bowls come in different sizes and are calibrated by volume, for example – two-pint, four-pint. They can be made from metal, pottery or plastic. The weight of the bowl should suit the mixture – a heavy mix, for a fruit cake, needs a stable bowl.

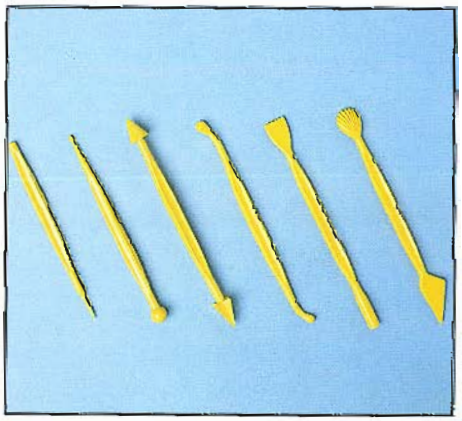


MIXING COLOUR

This refers to making a new colour from existing ones, perhaps where the required colour for a design is not obtainable ready-made. It applies to mixing liquid food colouring for painting, colouring icing, or sugarpaste. Always add the lighter colour to the darker, except where creating a pastel from white, or darkening a colour with black. In these cases, add the second colour or the black drop by drop until the desired colour is achieved.

MOCHA

Originally, a dark brown coffee imported from the port of Mocha in Arabia. Often used to refer to a flavouring made from coffee and chocolate. Used in cake decorating to flavour icing, buttercream fillings, and frosting. Flavour buttercream and icing mixtures with cocoa powder and instant coffee; a frosting mix will require the coffee to be in liquid form.



MODELLING TOOLS

Implements for shaping sugarpaste or other mediums into specific shapes for a particular model. Examples include: a bone-shaped tool having different-sized balls at either end for marking eye sockets or curving petals; pointed wooden doweling for pulled flowers; a shell-shaped tool used to mark feet; and a thin-bladed tool for cutting small sections of marzipan or sugarpaste or to make realistic markings on models.

MONOGRAMS

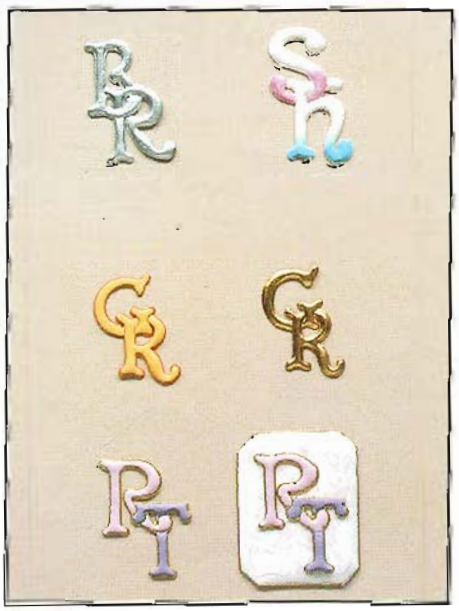
Two or three letters, usually the initials of a person or club, linked together, and often used to personalise a celebration cake. For engagements and weddings, the initials of the two people can be intertwined. First trace letters on to separate pieces of greaseproof paper. Superimpose them and adjust until you achieve a well-balanced design. Re-trace this combination on to a single sheet of paper. Ensure legibility by keeping spacing open and piping or painting in contrasting colours.

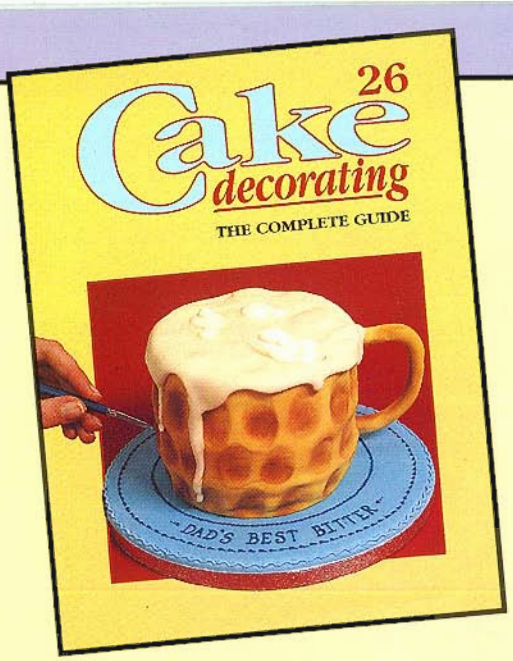
MOTIF

Any shape or figure which conveys a meaning to a particular theme – for example, holly on a Christmas cake; hearts on a wedding cake; or eggs and rabbits on an Easter cake.

MOTTOES

Concise phrases which offer advice or ask for something to be granted, such as 'Lend a hand' and 'Let there be light'. Appropriate mottoes can be used to decorate a cake for a particular occasion – for example, 'drive safely' for driving test congratulations. They can be created in a variety of ways. Short mottoes can be made as runouts and then attached to the cake. Longer mottoes can be treated like inscriptions and be piped directly on to the cake using a suitably coloured royal icing.





COMING IN ISSUE 26

Cake decorating

- Ideas
- Techniques
- Tips
- Skills

CLASSIC *cakes*
18th birthday cake

BRIGHT *ideas*
Dad's beer mug

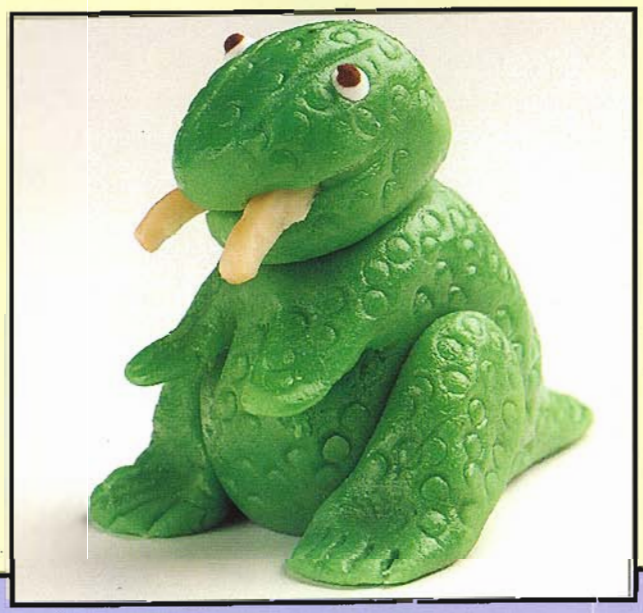
CAKE *craft*
Wild flower cutters

DECORATING *know-how*
Piping monograms

SECRETS *of success*
Ideas for plaques

FINISHING *touch*
Marzipan monsters

A-Z *of cake decorating*



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